

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRINCE GEORGE'S AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY LAWMAKERS
ADOPT BI-COUNTY FY' 2006 SPENDING PLANS –
MARLBORO MEADOWS ISSUE RESOLVED

JOINT BUDGET SESSION CONDUCTED FOR FIRST TIME VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Meeting in an annual joint session via video conference on Thursday, May 12, 2005, Prince George's and Montgomery County lawmakers unanimously adopted new spending plans for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPCC), and Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC). The fiscal year 2006 budgets become effective July 1, 2005.

Council Members approved the proposed \$493.8 million FY '06 water and sewer-operating budget, without amendments. The new spending plan includes a two and a half percent rate increase; funding for enhanced sewer maintenance and rehabilitation programs, Pay-As-You-Go capital funding; the Competitive Action Program; and salary enhancement for employees.

Adoption of the WSSC budget also addresses the long-term issue of Marlboro Meadows, the only community in the Washington Metropolitan area with an independent water and sewer system. Since the 1980's the community has been receiving expensive but inferior water and sewer service. Council action today assures that an independent facility will now be acquired to provide water and sewer service to Marlboro Meadows and connect the community to WSSC, which will monitor water purity to the residents there.

Prince George's County Council Chair Samuel H. Dean (D) – District 6, represents the Marlboro Meadows community. Chair Dean thanked the Montgomery County Council for their cooperation in the resolution of the nearly 40-year old Marlboro Meadows issue.

"I want to thank you personally for your sensitivity to the needs of the citizens in Marlboro Meadows. This started out to be a very difficult road, however, we were able to navigate through it. The end result is a win-win for the citizens of Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and especially for the residents of Marlboro Meadows."

Prince George's and Montgomery county legislators , through the use of technology, met in their respective hearing rooms in Upper Marlboro and Rockville. Previously, the two councils would alternate travel between jurisdictions for the joint budget session. Council Members conducted an inter-county video conference utilizing high-speed IP-based equipment. Connectivity for the meeting was the result of a joint technology venture between Network Maryland, University Systems of Maryland, University of Maryland, Prince George's County I-Net and Montgomery County FiberNet..

"It's great to come together with our Prince George's colleagues through the miracle of 21st century technology," said Montgomery County Council president Tom Perez. "We are saving money, time, and keeping at least a half dozen vehicles off the road while still attending to the people's business."

In other action, lawmakers from both counties approved the FY'06 appropriations for the bi-county portions of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Washington Suburban Transit Commission budgets.